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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kent County Board of Commissioners  
Accepts Grant for Life-Saving Equipment**

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI** – When seconds count, it is critical for first responders to have the equipment that can save lives. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) can make a difference. The Kent County Board of Commissioners this morning approved accepting an Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) from the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. More than \$63,000 was awarded to the Kent County Sheriff Department's Special Project Fund, which will be used to purchase AEDs for patrol vehicles.

Cardiac arrest – when a person's heart stops beating and he or she stops breathing – can happen to anyone at any age. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) can keep blood flowing and oxygen going to the brain, but it is critical to get the heart beating normally again as quickly as possible. AEDs are small, portable devices that deliver an electric shock to a person's heart, which can stop abnormal impulses in the heart and return it to a normal rhythm.

The Edward Byrne Memorial JAG grant will be used by the Sheriff Department to equip patrol vehicles with AEDs. This allows patrol staff to respond to calls related to drug overdoses and other emergency assistance situations and provide defibrillation faster, potentially saving lives. Sheriff Department patrol staff are certified to use AEDs, but do not currently have the equipment available in patrol cruisers. "There are times when the first responder on a medical emergency call is a Sheriff Deputy, and it could be several minutes before Emergency Medical Services arrive on the scene," said Undersheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young of the Kent County Sheriff Department. "Our Deputies are trained in several life-saving techniques and this gives them another tool that is far more effective in cardiac arrest cases."

Without the early use of CPR and AED during cardiac arrest, chances of survival are about 2.5 percent. An AED increases chances of survival to 75 percent; AED combined with CPR increases that to 80 percent. "We've heard time and again that AEDs can be used even by an untrained person," said Jim Saalfeld, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. "This fully automated, lightweight equipment has saved countless lives. We are grateful to receive this grant which will help our first responders react quickly and efficiently to cardiac arrest incidents."

*The Edward Byrne Memorial JAG supports local activities that prevent and control crime (including law enforcement programs, prosecution and court programs, prevention and education programs, corrections and community corrections programs, drug treatment programs, and planning, evaluation, and technology programs).*

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